United Nations S/2008/291

Security Council

Distr.: General
2 May 2008

Original: English

Letter dated 2 May 2008 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

As you know, Security Council members agreed today to the proposal of the United Kingdom to hold an open debate in the Council on 20 May.

I have the honour to enclose on behalf of my delegation a concept paper for that debate (see annex).

I should be grateful if this letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) John **Sawers**

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Annex to the letter dated 2 May 2008 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Post-conflict stabilization: peace after war

Security Council open debate: United Kingdom concept paper

1. On 20 May 2008 the United Kingdom proposes to convene an open debate of the Security Council to consider the challenges facing the international community in stabilizing countries recovering from conflict and delivering sustainable peace.

The problem

"The first 6 to 12 weeks following a ceasefire or peace accord is often the most critical period for establishing a stable peace" (Brahimi report on peacekeeping, 2000).

2. Nearly 30 per cent of conflicts that end through negotiated settlements restart within five years. Why? For a variety of reasons. Often because the international community has not got its act together in the critical period immediately following a ceasefire and peace agreement. At that point crucial needs have to be met. These include:

- Rapid implementation of the peace agreement to maintain the commitment of the parties
- Re-establishment of stability and the rule of law
- A demonstrable improvement to the lives of local people.

3. Such progress breeds confidence and encourages people to invest in peace. Failure to take such steps invites a relapse into conflict. The international community needs to support national and local State institutions to take responsibility rapidly for the recovery effort.

4. The United Nations and the international community more generally have got better at addressing these challenges. The United Nations integrated missions are ensuring greater coherence. But, despite this, international efforts remain too little, too late and too fragmented.

The objective

5. The aim of this debate is to identify the critical gaps that hamper international efforts to help countries stabilize and build sustainable peace as they emerge from conflict, and how these can best be addressed.

The gaps?

6. We have identified three critical gaps:

(a) Leadership on the ground

7. The successful implementation of Security Council mandates relies on United Nations actors beyond the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The Department of Political Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Children's Fund, among others, all have roles to play.

8. And it's not just about the United Nations. Peace operations depend on the support and cooperation of a range of actors — national Governments and affected populations, neighbouring countries, the international financial institutions, regional organizations, non-governmental organizations and local civil society.

9. The challenge is how to ensure this vast network of actors can operate effectively and coherently, building legitimate and competent national ownership and capacity as quickly as possible.

Questions for discussion

- How can we ensure the whole United Nations system moves into action in the lead-up to a peace support operation or the signing of a peace agreement, so that a fully integrated effort is ready to be launched from Day One?
- How can we better empower Special Representatives of the Secretary-General to lead and coordinate all United Nations efforts in country? Where appropriate, how can we enable them to coordinate international efforts more widely, e.g. in situations like Afghanistan?
- How can we coordinate the planning and running of operations, particularly with regional organizations and the international financial institutions?

(b) Rapidly deployable and skilled civilian capacity

"Where peacebuilding missions require it, international judicial experts, penal experts and human rights specialists, as well as civilian police, must be available in sufficient numbers to strengthen rule of law institutions" (Brahimi report)

10. Soldiers deploy rapidly to underpin ceasefires and peace agreements. Judges, police officers, administrators and other civilian experts are just as important, but deploy much later and in insufficient numbers.

11. The international community often fails to ensure that the right kinds of expertise are rapidly deployed, particularly in hostile or insecure environments. The United Nations, other international organizations and national Governments each have different and at times incompatible arrangements for deploying civilians to the field. The continuing growth in peace operations is making this harder as demand outstrips supply. This is further complicated by the issue of conditions of service for staff: most civilians are hired on contracts for each mission, and cannot build a career within the United Nations. The United Nations can do more to tap into non-governmental and private sector capacity. But the problem is broader than filling United Nations positions: it is about having people who can work for a range of international, national and regional organizations and who can be available to start that work at short notice.

Questions for discussion

- How can Member States best develop cadres of civilian experts that can be called upon to complement military peacekeeping efforts in post-conflict situations?
- How can we enhance the United Nations capacity to deploy police advisers? How can we expand the skills pool to areas such as justice, corrections, security sector reform, governance and economic recovery?
- How can we ensure that international civilian capability uses, supports and builds local capacities wherever possible?

(c) More rapid and flexible funding

12. Current funding instruments or appeal mechanisms do not provide rapid up-front support for the range of recovery and peacebuilding needs in the immediate aftermath of conflict. Humanitarian appeal mechanisms have sometimes included recovery elements, but these tend to be poorly funded. This is particularly true for economic recovery, governance, reintegration, livelihoods and assessment, strategy and coordination support.

13. And it takes too long for stabilization and recovery efforts to begin to take effect: the Multi-donor Trust Fund in the Sudan was established in December 2004 but did not disburse until December 2006 — 24 months after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. In Lebanon, the Recovery Fund first disbursed in June 2007, 10 months after the pledging conference and the ceasefire.

14. Discussion of these issues should of course take account of the relevant responsibilities of the General Assembly, the Peacebuilding Commission and the United Nations funds and programmes.

Questions for discussion

- What are the essential needs to help stabilize countries emerging from conflict and to support national and local authorities in delivering a peace dividend? What do we do when everything is urgent?
- What factors hamper the United Nations and the international community's ability to meet these needs, and how can these be addressed?